

Don't get caught on the cutting edge of knife safety

A food manufacturing environment can be a dangerous place. This is particularly true when employees are handling sharp knives. While knives are valuable tools in employee's daily routines, they also pose certain dangers. Here are some safety tips for employees to help prevent unnecessary injuries:

- **Start with a good knife:** A good knife should be well balanced, heavy, and appropriate for the job. For example, a large knife may be needed to make large cuts and a small knife to do trimming. Some knives are even ergonomically designed to reduce repetitive motion injuries.
- **Keep knives sharp:** A sharp knife is a safer knife. A sharp knife will cut through food easily with little force. A dull blade often requires more force to perform a task, which can cause loss of control and send a knife in an unpredictable direction.
- **Use a knife correctly:** The tip, middle, and heel portion of a knife are designed for different tasks. The tip of a knife is intended to cut tender foods. The back portion of the knife is for heavy work.
- **Focus on the task:** Because knives can be dangerous, employees should concentrate on the job at hand and practice good knife safety habits when working in close proximity to others.
- **Store knives correctly:** Knives should be securely kept in a scabbard or other appropriate place when not in use.
- **Accountability:** The number of knives in use at your facility should be accounted for on a routine basis. A misplaced knife could end up in a grinder or mixer and eventually reach the consumer.